

BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Summary

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Development Economics
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Centre for Studies of African Economies, Blavatnik School of Government
Location	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG
Grade and salary	Grade 7 Researcher: £38,674 - £46,913 (with a discretionary range to £51,059) per annum, depending on experience
Hours	Full-time
Contract type	Fixed-term for 3 years
Reporting to	Dr Kate Orkin
Vacancy reference	178151
Additional information	<p>The closing date for applications is 12:00 noon (UK time) on 14 March 2025.</p> <p>The expected start date is between 1 July and 1 September 2025.</p>

The role

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) at the Blavatnik School of Government and Department of Economics is looking for a postdoctoral research fellow with an interest in urban labour markets in developing economies, particularly how to reduce search and matching frictions and increase firm demand for labour to increase employment, earnings and productivity. The fellow will both conduct their own research projects in this area and collaborate as a co-author on an ambitious series of projects in South Africa and Kenya, for which large-scale funding has been secured.

The post is suitable for a candidate who has been awarded, or is nearing completion of, a doctoral degree, to conduct research in development economics for three years at CSAE, based at the Blavatnik School of Government in Oxford. The successful candidate will ideally have experience with fieldwork, a strong technical background in data analysis, and potentially experience with relevant economic models (e.g. search and matching models). Their research



should be related to the African continent, or on economic themes with direct relevance to it. Applicants originally from sub-Saharan Africa are strongly encouraged to apply.

The collaborative projects build on existing work with the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, a not-for-profit social enterprise that works at scale with partners to find solutions for the challenge of youth unemployment, and the South African government providing income support to jobseekers. One stream of work will develop and test, in randomised controlled trials, a series of interventions to improve the efficacy of job search and/or stimulate labour demand by firms. Another stream of work will use existing administrative data, collected from the job search platform SAYouth.mobi, as well as government data sources.

The fellow will join at inception of the collaborative projects, with opportunity to shape their design. There is considerable scope to develop hypotheses and lead and drive projects within the research infrastructure. Projects have research assistant time in field and in Oxford and project management support from the Centre administrative team. There is an existing PI team for the grant, including Dr Rob Garlick (Duke) and Dr Lukas Hensel (Peking).

The Centre for the Study of African Economies at the Blavatnik School of Government and Department of Economics is a leading research centre in development economics. You will be part of a team including Research Assistants and a Research and Operations Manager.

We would be open to applications from people going on to tenure track posts if they are prepared to commit to completing projects after they leave Oxford. To facilitate collaboration and participation in the research community, you will be expected to work from our office at least some days per week and attend seminars.

The managers of the team undertake to create a supportive research environment, provide structures and mentorship to facilitate the long-term career development of staff, and structure work to maximise the potential for autonomy, creativity and personal growth. You will be encouraged to engage with the large community of development economists at the Centre of the Study of African Economies and in the broader Oxford community.

Flexible working

Where it is operationally possible, the School's flexible working policy provides individuals the opportunity to work remotely for a proportion of their working time.

Responsibilities

The main duties of the post are as follows:

- Engage in original, world-class research of a quality commensurate with publication in leading international economics journal in an area relevant to the programme of research, both in collaboration with the principal investigators and independently, and present original research papers at international conferences and seminars.
- Contribute to and/or collaborate on other new and continuing research projects conducted by the Principal Investigators, with scope for new single authored and jointly authored research. Activities will be divided appropriately between the post-doctoral fellow and research assistants on the project. Activities could include but may not be limited to:
 - Design, development, budgeting and fundraising for new research projects;
 - Development and maintenance of relationships with implementing partner NGOs or governments;
 - Conducting literature reviews and writing synthesis papers;
 - Development of questionnaires and interventions, including field travel;

- Managing and supporting fieldwork firms or qualitative fieldworkers, including field travel;
- Budget management and other administrative tasks to support fieldwork or the general lab work;
- Grant reporting;
- Data management, analysis and writing of publications;
- Support the organisation, management and supervision of research assistants and field or other staff;
- Promotion of research outputs and relevant findings to key stakeholders, including policy-makers, the media or other end users, through personal contacts, policy briefs and developing and maintaining website content.
- Independently manage their academic and associated administrative duties, to coordinate their workload, meet deadlines. The role involves project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines, co-operating in the administration of the research projects.
- Play a full role in the intellectual life of the development economics research community at CSAE, including contributing to the organisation and attendance of seminars, and workshops, contribute through mentoring and/or supervision of students and pre-docs, and other activities consistent with further developing the vibrant development economics community at Oxford.

The postholder may have the opportunity to lecture and tutor postgraduate students, and engage in assessment and university examining.

Many previous Oxford postdoctoral fellows have moved on to permanent faculty positions at leading universities in the US and Europe, or in leading public policy organisations.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria that are set out below.

Essential selection criteria

- PhD or equivalent in economics, public policy, development studies with a focus on development economics. Candidates nearing completion of their doctoral dissertation may also be considered.
- Ability to carry out independent quantitative research, including strong writing skills and excellent skills in statistics/econometrics.
- Strong IT skills specific to the discipline, including use of Stata or R and LaTeX.
- Ability to innovate and work effectively with colleagues, including excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Management skills and strong organisational skills; experience co-ordinating teams and managing a variety of tasks
- A demonstrated interest in research in the area described in the introduction.
- Proactive and reliable, with a flexible approach to work.

Desirable selection criteria

- Previous experience in designing and conducting lab and/or field experiments or research in developing countries or an alternative methodological expertise of relevance to the programme.
- Evidence of developing a track record of internationally excellent publications in highly-ranked, peer reviewed academic journals, commensurate with the candidate's career stage.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit where you worked. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

Hazard-specific / Safety-critical duties

This job includes hazards or safety-critical activities. If you are offered the post, you will be asked to complete a health questionnaire which will be assessed by our Occupational Health Service, and the offer of employment will be subject a successful outcome of this assessment.

The hazards or safety-critical duties involved are as follows:

- Travel outside of Europe or North America on University Business

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE)

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) is a development economics research centre with researchers at the Department of Economics and the Department for International Development, University of Oxford, and the Blavatnik School of Government. Its mission is to apply rigorous research methods to improve economic and social conditions for the poorest societies in the world.

The Centre has a strong research reputation, which provides the basis for its increasing involvement in policy debates and other assistance to African governments and international organisations. The CSAE annual conference is an internationally renowned event for economists, attracting around 400 delegates. CSAE staff are not only involved in research, but also in teaching and supervising students. CSAE is home to the Journal of African Economies, which is widely circulated in Africa and which funds the annual JAE Fellowship programme. This programme enables African academics to spend a term at the CSAE each year.

The Centre publishes a Working Paper Series, operates a programme of lunch-time seminars on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during term, and runs several workshops and conferences each year. All CSAE work is available on the website at <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/>

The Blavatnik School of Government

Our vision is of a world better led, a world better served and a world better governed. We are a global school committed to improving the quality of government and public policymaking worldwide, through three routes: teaching current and future leaders; applied research; and engagement with government and practitioners.

The School was founded in 2010 and our founding dean is [Professor Ngaire Woods](#). We admitted the first 38 Master of Public Policy (MPP) students in 2012 and we currently accept around 140 MPP students and around eight doctoral students a year. We also accept a small group of students for our MSc in Public Policy Research.

The Blavatnik School of Government holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all. You can find more information on the [Blavatnik School of Government's website](#).

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post. This should be in your own words and provide examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

If you currently work for the University please note that:

- as part of the referencing process, we will contact your current department to confirm basic employment details including reason for leaving
- although employees may hold multiple part-time posts, they may not hold more than the equivalent of a full time post. If you are offered this post, and accepting it would take you over the equivalent of full-time hours, you will be expected to resign from, or reduce hours in, your other posts(s) before starting work in the new post.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the HR team directly on recruit@bsg.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82** of 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, flexible working options, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see <https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/family-leave>). Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>. For information about how we support those going through menopause see <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>